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# Introduction to NEWS

for users of MS-DOS and UNIX systems

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# Outline

- **What is USENET NEWS**
- **How is it structured?**
- **Netiquette**
- **News readers**
- **Brief exploration**

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# References

- **Zen and the Art of the Internet  
(Kehoe, 1992)**
- **The Whole Internet: User's Guide  
and Catalog (Krol, O'Reilly 1992,  
ISBN 1565920252)**

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# What is NEWS?

- **NOT mailing list**
- **NOT bulletin board**
- **completely distributed**
- **completely anarchic**
- **completely self-regulating**
- **5% gold, 95% dross**
- **absolutely irreplaceable**

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# What is USENET

- **NOT an organisation**
- **NOT a democracy**
- **NOT fair**
- **NOT a right**
- **NOT a public utility**
- **NOT a commercial network**
- **NOT the Internet**
- **NOT software**
- **The set of sites on many different networks that co-operate to exchange NEWS articles**



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# Amazing statistics

- **20,000 articles per day**
- **50 MBytes per day**
- **estimated 2 million readers**
- **estimated 70,000 sites**

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# Controlling chaos

- **First line: site systems managers**
- **Second line: existing readers**
- **Flames**

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# How NEWS is organised

- hierarchies of groups (e.g. sci.\*)
- groups of articles (e.g. sci.physics)
- 1,000 to 1,500 groups
- subscribe to individual groups of interest
- groups may be global or regional or local
- articles on same topic in group form a thread
- thread is original posting plus responses

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# Groups

<b>alt</b>	<b>alternative, bizarre or new groups (*)</b>
<b>bionet</b>	<b>groups for biologists, particularly geneticists</b>
<b>bit</b>	<b>selection of BITnet mailing lists</b>
<b>biz</b>	<b>discussions related to business; commercial postings allowed</b>
<b>comp</b>	<b>computer science and related topics</b>
<b>gnu</b>	<b>GNU software</b>
<b>ieee</b>	<b>discussions on IEEE</b>
<b>k12</b>	<b>for schools</b>
<b>news</b>	<b>NEWS network itself</b>
<b>rec</b>	<b>hobbies, recreation, arts (*)</b>
<b>sci</b>	<b>scientific research &amp; applications</b>
<b>soc</b>	<b>social, political issues</b>
<b>talk</b>	<b>formless debate (*)</b>
<b>vmsnet</b>	<b>DECnet and related</b>

**misc**

**none of the above (NB  
misc.jobs and misc.forsale)**

**(\*)**

**Not currently offered at Dundee**

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# Netiquette 1

- **Read new users groups**
- **Don't add new groups**
- **Read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) before posting question**
- **To contact a person, use email**
- **Use reply (goes via email) rather than follow-up (goes via NEWS), unless of wide interest**
- **Use meaningful subject (title) for new postings**

- **use minimum quoting techniques in reply or follow-up to give context**
- **use \*.test groups for tests!**

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# Netiquette 2

- **What you write becomes public**
- **Reflects on Dundee University as well as you**
- **Very easy to offend someone**
- **Don't send abusive, harassing or bigoted messages**
- **Be very careful with irony or sarcasm**
- **DON'T SHOUT**
- **Don't respond in anger**

- **Re-read before you send:  
will you regret it in the  
morning?**

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# Netiquette 3

## Body language: smiley faces

- :-)**            **sarcastic or joking statement**
- :-(**            **frown: upset or depressed**
- ;-)**            **wink: sarcastic or flirtatious remark**
- :->**           **biting sarcasm**
- :-#**            **My lips are sealed**
- %-<|>**        **drunk with laughter**
- Etc.**

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# NEWS readers

- Old readers: rn, vn
- Threaded readers: nn, tin, trn
- X-based readers: xrn
- PC readers: trumpet, WinQVTnet